

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 120940Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9971
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 1273

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, OTEA, BG, IN, US
SUBJ: FARAKKA BARRAGE

1. AT THE CLOSE OF MEETING ON FOOD PROBLEMS YESTERDAY WITH FOOD FOR PEACE COORDINATOR SPITZER, AID DIRECTOR, AND ME, DEPUTY CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR AND AIR FORCE CHIEF TAWAB SAID HE COULD NOT END OUR CONVERSATION WITHOUT EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION FOR STEPS WHICH WE HAD TAKEN TO PREVENT INDIAN INTERVENTION IN BANGLADESH LAST NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER. NOW, HE SAID, HE THOUGHT WE COULD ALSO "BE MORE HELPFUL" IN INFLUENCING INDIA IN THE MATTER OF SHARING WATER WITH BANGLADESH. (TAWAB HAD DIGRESSED EARLIER IN OUR CONVERSATION TO MAKE AN ACRIMONIOUS ATTACK ON INDIA'S UNFRIENDLY ACTIONS TOWARD BANGLADESH -- RECITING THE PROVISION OF SANCTUARY FOR ANTI-BDG ELEMENTS, ASSISTING IN RAIDS INTO BANGLADESH, AND UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL OF EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS OF GANGES WATER -- WHICH WDV DISTRACTING BANGLADESH, HE SAID, FROM FULL CONCENTRATION ON ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.)

2. I TOLD TAWAB THAT WE HAD FOLLOWED THE WATERS QUESTION CLOSELY HERE, MENTIONING THAT I HAD TRIED TO INFORM MYSELF PERSONNALLY OF THE WATER AND SALINITY SITUATION IN THE KHULNA AREA DURING A RECENT VISIT THERE, AND WE HAD ARRANGED FOR BANGLADESH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR ABBAS TO MEET WITH DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS WHILE HE
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WAS IN WASHINGTON. WE UNDERSTOOD THEIR CONCERN,

BUT WE THOUGHT THAT BANGLADESH AND INDIA SHOULD GET
TOGETHER AND WORK OUT A SATISFACTORY ACCOMMODATION. I SAID

DIRECT TALKS SEEMED TO ME THE ONLY WAY TO PROCEED.
TAWAB RESPONDED THAT BANGLADESH WAS QUITE WILLING TO
TALK WITH INDIA BUT DID NOT WISH TO DO SO "FROM ITS KNEES."

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